



July 16, 2024

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee  
**FROM:** Ron Munds, General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item 3 – 07/16/2024 PRAC Meeting**  
Save Cuesta Inlet/Sunnyside School Status Update

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

*Receive update and provide input.*

### **DISCUSSION**

The Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) has been discussing passive and active recreation issues in Los Osos. The committee heard from representatives from the youth soccer and baseball leagues about issues they were having with the school district, pickleball and tennis players regarding the limited number of courts available and general comments about the limitations of the community's only public park.

The following is a brief summary of two initiatives that have had some progress in moving forward since the last PRAC meeting:

1. The first is the Save Cuesta Inlet effort, which is an endeavor to acquire a unique 13 plus acre coastal property that is currently privately owned and make it publicly owned in perpetuity. It has both passive and active recreation value as well as the opportunity to restore sensitive habitat. A non-profit organization was formed to solicit donations to purchase the property when it became available for sale. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contacted the District to express interest in assisting in the purchase of the property and to provide assistance in the improvements that would need to be made as public facility. They encouraged District staff to become more involved and possibly take the lead role in the acquisition and ownership.

2. The second opportunity involves the announcement by the San Luis Coastal Unified School District (School District) of the sale of Sunnyside School. The site is approximately 12 acres and is the middle of town. It has the opportunities for multiple recreational benefits while continuing the use of the buildings for existing commercial uses. It is rare for parcel of this size and location to become available. The School District is in conversation with the County regarding the possible purchase of the site. There have not been any actions regarding acquisition of the site taken by the Board of Supervisors at this point in time and there is concern that with the current County budget shortfalls, their financial situation could preclude the County from moving forward with a purchase of the property.

### **LOCAC/District Coordination**

The District and the Los Osos Community Advisory Council (LOCAC) have been in discussions to explore joint opportunities to further the community discussion

on park space. The intent of the coordination with LOCAC is to broaden the outreach opportunities for community involvement through each entities network of communication. Participants in the coordination meetings have included representative of LOCAC, the District and guest participants from the County Parks Commission and others. The goal is to discuss the broader park opportunities for the community and then have town hall meetings for the community to weigh in on their wants and needs so to hopefully set priorities and direction for future actions.

The group received a presentation by USFWS regarding what they would like to see in terms of acquisition, restoration and operations of the Cuesta Inlet. Their "Brief" is attached to this report. The group also heard from the Save Cuesta Inlet group. They provided a comprehensive vision report which is also attached to this report.

Also attached are the summaries of the meetings so the committee can review and see the overall items discussed.

**Attachments**

11/14/2023 Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee minutes  
LOCAC/CSD meeting summaries  
USFWS Cuesta Inlet White Paper  
Save Cuesta Inlet Vision Paper

## A COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR SAVING THE CUESTA INLET- LOS OSOS, CA



### **Introduction:**

Save Cuesta Inlet (SCI), a non-profit, all-volunteer organization of concerned citizens, is pleased to present this report as requested by the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) representatives. It is our hope to partner with USFWS to preserve the unique habitat of Cuesta Inlet and ensure public access in perpetuity to this local treasure.

This report addresses the USFWS's desire for our broad vision and "wish list" for the crucial elements for preserving Cuesta Inlet. We have four distinct categories, along with an appendix of supporting documentation. The categories are:

- Vision for the Site
- Vision for Public Access

- Vision for Operations/ Management/ Maintenance
- Vision for Financing

### **Who is SCI?:**

When the present owners of Cuesta Inlet decided to list the property for sale, a group of community members came together to facilitate the transfer of the property to public ownership and ensure preservation and public access in perpetuity. The group grew and is now known as Save Cuesta Inlet (SCI).

SCI wishes to express in this document our community's desire for the future of the Cuesta Inlet. Our mission statement encapsulates the “why,” our vision statement the “what,” and the objectives, the “how.”

"Save Cuesta Inlet exists to ensure diverse opportunities for access, recreation and the personal enrichment of our local community and visitors while preserving and protecting the extraordinary biological diversity of the Inlet along with its valued natural and cultural resources and creating opportunities for a wide range of quality outdoor recreation." –**SCI Mission Statement**

“Protection of the Cuesta Inlet and preserve continued access for the benefit of the community, wildlife and habitat.” –**SCI Vision Statement**

### **SCI Objectives:**

- Ensure public access in perpetuity.
- Clean up the Inlet and dispose of derelict and abandoned boats.
- Provide suitable recreation and sustain wildlife.
- Protect cultural, natural, and biological resources of the Inlet
- Establish the Inlet as valued parkland for public enjoyment and environmental protection.
- Develop a funding source for the maintenance and betterment of the Inlet.

## **1) Vision for Site**

Cuesta Inlet has an interesting history. It was originally a naturally occurring tidal saltwater marshland attached to the back bay of Morro Bay until it was illegally

dewatered and bulldozed in the 1960s in hopes of building homes with boat docks. That plan was abandoned, and the Inlet has since become a coveted open space area for waterway and trail access. The land around the Inlet exemplifies the scenic beauty of the estuary, with a unique and critically important habitat for wildlife. Our aim is to protect and restore native plant and aquatic life and continue to allow access to the trails and waterways.

Preserving Cuesta Inlet in open space will not only provide the public with continued access, it will also preclude development of the land, allowing for its natural flood control properties to continue. It will also avoid adding new development to an area at risk of inundation from sea level rise associated with climate change.

We identified the following elements as part of our vision for the Cuesta Inlet site:

- Provide a place to store kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards.
- Restore degraded areas, remove invasive ice plant and other non-natives such as pampas grass and veldt grass, and restore and protect native species<sup>1</sup>
- Protect water quality by controlling erosion and pollutants using best management practices. Provide dog bag dispensers, trash receptacles, and informational kiosks encouraging environmental stewardship.
- Remove abandoned and derelict boats.



- Ensure the continued viability of the Los Osos Wildlife Corridor that links Montana de Oro with the hills to the north and east and to the sand dunes. Mountain lions, bobcats, bear, deer, coyote, and other wildlife have been sighted at the Inlet and/or surrounding areas. Purchasing Cuesta Inlet for parkland will prevent development that could impact

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<sup>1</sup> A listing of plants and wildlife including aquatic species accompanies this report in a separate appendix. Endangered California seablite (*Suaeda californica*) and salt marsh bird's beak (*Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *maritimus*) are located in adjacent tidal marsh habitats to the north and south of the property. Western Monarch butterflies, and the Morro Bay Blue Butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides moroensis*) that depends on native plant species such as dune lupine (*Lupinus chamissonis*), inhabit the area which is also an essential stopover for migrating birds.

the wildlife corridor with night lighting, loss of habitat, impermeable fencing, and other encroachments that come with development.



## **2) Vision for Public Access:**

Cuesta Inlet has been a treasured spot for Los Ososians and visitors alike. Our aim is to keep the Inlet waterways open for kayaks, canoes and stand up paddle boarding. The Inlet will provide opportunities for all age groups and physical abilities to experience its serene setting and beauty. The public will enjoy a spectacular outlook, be able to spend quiet time on a bench, or learn about the unique ecology and ecosystem. To achieve this, we have identified the following elements:

- Parking, including ADA compliant spaces
- Areas to launch personal non-motorized watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, and stand up paddle boards
- Kayak storage with racks located outside the viewshed
- Boardwalks at some portions
- Interpretive signage and information kiosk
- Dedicated bird viewing area
- Benches and picnic tables
- Dogs on leash would be welcome

## **3) Vision for Operations/Management/Maintenance:**

SCI believes that the optimal arrangement for managing and maintaining the Cuesta Inlet is a strong private/public partnership. Our aim is to transform the current non-profit organization scope of SCI into a "Friends of Cuesta Inlet". Our volunteer leadership remains strong, dedicated and has only grown in size and scope. To achieve this, we have identified the following elements:



- Explore management of the Inlet with the Los Osos Community Services District and/or the SLO County Parks Department. Both have deep roots in our community and share the vision for public open space.
- SCI would transition to become “Friends of Cuesta Inlet” and would model the ongoing volunteer operations after similar community groups like “Friends of the Elfin Forest” and the Morro Coast Audubon Society’s stewardship of Sweet Springs Nature Preserve.
- Maintenance of Cuesta Inlet may be best managed via contract for landscape maintenance and augmented with volunteers and government services.
- Partnerships and programs with Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Cuesta College, Morro Bay National Estuary Program, Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, and others will further the Inlet’s ecology and restoration. Bringing in students from high schools, middle schools and elementary schools for outdoor education and recreation will further public access, education and appreciation of nature.

#### **4) Vision for Financing**

To preserve the Cuesta Inlet, financing is needed to purchase the property that is currently for sale; and funding sources are needed for the management and preservation of the Inlet for the public. Again, a strong public/private partnership is key to financial security. To achieve this, we have identified the following elements:

- Negotiate a purchase with current owners. The Inlet is privately owned by five individuals as tenants in common. They have listed the property for sale for \$1,000,000. SCI offered \$700,000 which is the appraised conservation value for the land. Due to a longtime and critical water shortage, there is a moratorium on new development in Los Osos which has lowered vacant property values. SCI’s offer was not accepted. In January of this year, the realtor, Jack Franklin, notified SCI that the owners had submitted documentation to the County of San Luis Obispo to support the premise that five legal lots make up Cuesta Inlet. They are awaiting approval and certificates of compliance for each lot. They hope that by creating five lots, the property's appraised value will increase.
- Move quickly and decisively because time is of the essence - we are at a critical crossroads to preserve the Inlet and deter development. A private party purchase is a very real possibility. Such a purchase threatens access to the trails and waterway which could be fenced off due to liability concerns. Moreover, future development of its buildable lot would impact habitat and wildlife. We have a small window of opportunity to purchase Cuesta Inlet and preserve access, habitat and wildlife. SCI is firmly committed to working with USFWS and other partners to save this treasured resource.
- Fund purchase through donations and grants.
  - SCI has raised \$198,637 to date from community-based donations, with additional donations likely once the property is secured for public access.

- SCI has been in contact with numerous agencies that have indicated support of the project and willingness to entertain proposals for grants, either for purchase or betterment of the Inlet. Government and conservancy funds and grants are available from organizations such as the Trust for Public Land, California Wildlife and Conservation Board, the Coastal Conservancy, Federal agencies and others that prioritize conservation of natural open space, wetlands, wildlife corridors, wildlife and habitat, and recreational purposes. Purchasing the Inlet for parkland and public access also aligns with the State of California's and the Federal Government's 30x30 programs to dedicate 30% of state and federal lands in open space by 2030.
- Funding for management and maintenance.
  - SCI raised funds with the understanding they would be used to purchase the Inlet and for related costs. Any excess funds would be used for the management and betterment of the Inlet, such as cleaning up derelict boats, building boardwalks, installing signage, restoring habitats, and maintaining the Inlet.
  - Fees for storing boats is a potential ongoing revenue stream.

We look forward to collaborating with the USFWS team and are happy to provide more details. For more information or to answer any questions, please contact Margarete Schmidt at (559) 592-9569 or email [margareteschmidt@gmail.com](mailto:margareteschmidt@gmail.com). We appreciate the ability to partner with you to preserve this unique habitat and highly-valued community resource at this very important point in time.

**Appendix** Visuals to illustrate text:

- Photos of bad boats
- Area for potential restoration
- Aerial with lot lines showing the 22 acre site
- Preliminary Title Report – First American Title Company



**CUESTA INLET ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION PROJECT**  
**Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County, California**

US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office  
and Los Osos Community Services District

**Introduction.** Cuesta Inlet is an approximately 14-acre property located on the southeastern end of Morro Bay, in San Luis Obispo County, California (Figure 1). The site is comprised of three separate assessor parcels combined and listed for sale in Los Osos. Cuesta Inlet is undeveloped and supports predominantly recreational land uses and zoning. The public currently has unrestricted access to the site, and this resulted in a network of trails, boat launch access points, and haul out locations being established throughout the property. The site continues to serve the public as a popular place to hike, dog walk, kayak, beach comb, and bird watch, but is not maintained. Cuesta Inlet is one of the last remaining undeveloped properties on the immediate shoreline of Morro Bay and provides public beach access. It is situated west of the Morro Coast Audubon Sweet Springs Nature Preserve (Sweet Springs) and east of open space areas within Montaña de Oro State Park (MDO). Cuesta Inlet hosts expanses of undeveloped waterfront shoreline, and also supports several sensitive habitat types with high conservation values. These sensitive habitats are not currently afforded protections and are at risk of further degradation and conversion to development. In this regard, the site is unlike Sweet Springs and MDO, which are safeguarded from development and therefore, conserved in perpetuity. We, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) want to work with amenable partners to acquire, restore, and permanently conserve Cuesta Inlet so that it can continue to serve both the public and the unique plant and wildlife species that it supports, and their habitats.

**Background Information.** Cuesta Inlet occurs on a novel geologic substrate, which is aeolian, stabilized sand dunes formed sometime during the Pleistocene-Holocene transition. This substrate is overlain with Baywood Fine Sands soil types, which are also narrowly endemic, and have an extremely limited distribution. Several sensitive plant communities are derived from Baywood Fine Sand soils because of their edaphic relationship, and they provide habitat for a suite of special status, state, and federally listed species. These plant communities include beach strand, mud flats, coastal salt marsh, coastal dune scrub, coastal sage scrub, maritime chaparral, and coast live oak woodland. Most of Baywood Fine Sand soils were converted to residential and urban development and very few natural areas remain. We recently approved the Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan for a 25-year term and San Luis Obispo County (County) updated and adopted the revised Los Osos Community Plan. We anticipate implementation of these plans to initiate a wave of increased development throughout the region. Therefore, we think now is the time to act strategically to ensure conservation of remaining open space areas on Baywood Fine Sand soils, starting with acquisition and restoration of Cuesta Inlet.

Cuesta Inlet was historically comprised of predominantly coastal salt marsh habitat. However, sometime during the 1960s developers dredged a large section of the site with aspirations of creating a waterfront, residential community, and formed the meandering inlet for which the site is named. Some coastal salt marsh habitat persists on the site, as well as a narrow open beach strand, tidal mud flats, and coastal dune scrub areas. However, the unrestricted public access and general lack of management and maintenance onsite has led to accumulation of trash, abandon kayaks, and other debris. A variety of nonnative, invasive weeds now occur within these ruderal/disturbed areas. The native plant communities onsite are at risk of further degradation and the site needs to be remediated and restored. In addition, the site needs a responsible management partner that can provide basic public services for



**Figure 1.** Cuesta Inlet property located on the open waterfront of Morro Bay, within the Community of Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County, California.

the public users; like trail maintenance, dog waste bags, and trash cans, and possibly other services like vegetation management and weed abatement.

The communities of Los Osos and Baywood Park are unincorporated, so they fall under County jurisdiction for most general public services. Many members of the local communities express that they are underserved in terms of recreational facilities, local parks, and open spaces. The County responds that these communities are adequately served by Sweet Springs and MDO. Regardless, the populations of Los Osos and Baywood Park continue to increase, and we recognize the needs of these communities for expanded parks and recreation services. The high amount of public use Cuesta Inlet sustains as a space for outdoor recreation is evidence of the needs of these communities. However, the lack of management at Cuesta Inlet has led to littering, trampling of vegetation, habitat degradation, dog waste accumulation, and an abundance of abandoned kayaks and debris. As development increases in Los Osos, it is crucial that remaining open spaces are preserved from development, not only to protect public access for the benefit of the local community, but also to protect these rare habitats for conservation of plants and wildlife.

**Sensitive Habitat Types.** Cuesta Inlet supports several vegetation community types including beach strand, mud flats, coastal salt marsh, coastal scrub, remnant maritime chaparral, nonnative grassland, and ruderal/disturbed. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recognizes several of these as sensitive habitat types. These include Northern Coastal Salt Marsh, Central Dune Scrub, and Central Maritime Chaparral. Similarly, the California Coastal Commission recognizes several of these sensitive community types as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) and Cuesta Inlet is within the limits of the California Coastal Zone. However, we have not formally assessed, classified, or delineated the vegetation community types within Cuesta Inlet and are not yet able to provide more specific information on their extents and current conditions.

**Special-Status Species.** The habitat types within Cuesta Inlet support many common plant and wildlife species including invertebrates, reptiles, birds, and mammals. It and the immediately surrounding areas also support an array of rare, endemic, and special status species. Table 1 below provides a list of special status species that occur within the Cuesta Inlet property and immediately surrounding areas.

**Table 1. Special Status Plant and Wildlife Species Documented within Cuesta Inlet and Immediately Surrounding Areas in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Diversity Database ([CNDDB] 2024).**

Species Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Other Status
Plants				
<i>Arctostaphylos morroensis</i>	Morro manzanita	FT	--	CRPR List 1B.1
<i>Arenaria paludicola</i>	marsh sandwort	FE	ST	CRPR List 1B.1
<i>Atriplex coulteri</i>	Coulter's saltbush	--	--	CRPR List 1B.2
<i>Chenopodium littoreum</i>	coastal goosefoot	--	--	CRPR List 1B.2
<i>Chloropyron maritimum</i> ssp. <i>maritimum</i>	Point Reyes salty bird's-beak	--	--	CRPR List 1B.2
<i>Dithyrea maritima</i>	beach spectaclepod	--	ST	CRPR List 1B.1

Species Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Other Status
<i>Erigeron blochmaniae</i>	Blochman's leafy daisy	--	--	CRPR List 1B.2
<i>Horkelia cuneata</i> var. <i>sericea</i>	Kellogg's horkelia	--	--	CRPR List 1B.1
<i>Lasthenia glabrata</i> ssp. <i>coulteri</i>	Coulter's goldfields	--	--	CRPR List 1B.1
<i>Layia erubescens</i>	blushing layia	--	--	CRPR List 1B.2
<i>Monardella sinuata</i> ssp. <i>sinuata</i>	southern curly-leaved monardella	--	--	CRPR List 1B.2
<i>Suaeda californica</i>	California seablite	FE	--	CRPR List 1B.1
Invertebrates				
<i>Danaus plexippus plexippus</i>	western monarch	FC	--	--
<i>Helminthoglypta walkeriana</i>	Morro shoulderband snail	FT	--	--
Reptiles				
<i>Anniella pulchra</i>	legless lizard	--	SSC	--
Birds				
<i>Charadrius nivosus nivosus</i>	western snowy plover	FT	SSC	--
<i>Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus</i>	California black rail	--	ST	FP
<i>Rallus obsoletus obsoletus</i>	California Ridgway's rail	FE	SE	FP
Mammals				
<i>Dipodomys heermanii morroensis</i>	Morro Bay kangaroo rat	FE	SE	FP
<i>Nyctinomops macrotis</i>	big free-tailed bat	--	SSC	--

Notes: FC – Federal Candidate; FE – Federal Endangered; FT – Federal Threatened; SE – State Endangered; ST – State Threatened; SSC – State Species of Special Concern; FP – State Fully Protected; CRPR – California Rare Plant Rank; List 1B.1 – Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere and seriously threatened in California; List 1B.2 – Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere and moderately threatened in California.

California Seablite. Cuesta Inlet supports federally endangered California seablite, which is a succulent, perennial shrub in the Chenopodiaceae (goosefoot) family. The species occurs mostly along the margins of coastal salt marsh habitats, but also occurs on sea cliffs and beaches near creek outlets in select coastal areas, on coastal bluffs and berms, where the habitat is more of a coastal dune scrub community. The species' flowers are small, not showy, and typically bloom July through October. However, blooming may extend from April through November. Its' fruits are utricles. California seablite is currently known from a total of 18 CNDDB occurrences, four other locations, and 40 geo-referenceable herbarium specimens within the Consortium of California Herbaria Data Portal 2 (CCH2). There are 8 CNDDB occurrences mapped around Morro Bay and 10 documented within the San Francisco Bay Area, with

only two presumed extant. California seablite threats include recreational activities, nonnative invasive species, recruitment failure, oil spills and clean up, development, urbanization, and maintenance, alteration, and loss of habitat, dredging, predation, stochastic loss due to small population size and restricted range, climate change, and rust disease. If acquired, habitat restoration and site remediation through removal of trash and other debris is sure to benefit California seablite and the occurrence will be safeguarded from future development. In addition, invasive weed management efforts, and other improvements like trail maintenance and potential installation of a boardwalk or rope/post fencing, will ameliorate threats from invasive species and recreation. We'd also help facilitate augmentation of the population onsite for recovery.

Morro Shoulderband Snail. Cuesta Inlet also supports federally threatened Morro shoulderband snail. This species is a terrestrial snail endemic to Baywood Fine Sand soils. It is found only in the Los Osos area within San Luis Obispo County, where the range is constrained to the distribution of Baywood Fine Sand soils. Morro shoulderband snail occurs in a variety of native habitat types including coastal dune and coastal sage scrub, maritime chaparral, and the active dunes along the Morro Bay Sand Spit. It also utilizes nonnative and ruderal areas dominated by invasive species such as veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) and ice plant (*Carpobrotus* spp.). Morro shoulderband snail feeds, reproduces, completes most of its growth, and is most active during the rainy season, which typically occurs from October through April. However, active periods may vary given the amount of rainfall, levels of humidity, and other periods of coastal fog. The rest of the year, Morro shoulderband snail is largely inactive. It enters a state of aestivation, where individuals produce an epiphragm (seal of dried mucus) across the shell aperture to reduce water loss and remain inactive. It may also attach itself to a substrate, including lower branches of shrubs, for aestivation with the same mechanism. Aestivation sites are largely opportunistic and include leaf litter, clumps of grass, bases of shrubs, and other debris piles and features such as construction materials, wood piles, stockpiles of plastic, and cement debris. Morro shoulderband snail is currently known from a total of 14 CNDDDB occurrences, all centered around Morro Bay. The northern-most location is at Morro Strand State Beach, and the southern-most is from Montaña de Oro State Park, west of Pecho Valley Road. The most interior location is documented from the Los Osos Oaks State Reserve. Threats to Morro shoulderband snail include urban development, habitat loss and fragmentation from agriculture, vegetation management, predation, and climate change effects. If we acquire Cuesta Inlet, habitat restoration and site remediation through removal of trash and other debris will benefit Morro shoulderband snail and the site will be safeguarded from future development. In addition, other improvements like trail maintenance and potential installation of a boardwalk or rope/post fencing, will benefit the snail and its' habitat for recovery.

We generally envision implementation of strategic efforts at Cuesta Inlet to include four phases: 1. Acquisition, 2. Regulatory Permitting, 3. Habitat Restoration, Remediation, and Construction, and 4. Operations and Maintenance. Each of these phases are described further below.

**Land Acquisition.** The owners listed Cuesta Inlet for sale in 2022, with an asking price of one million dollars. Listing it for sale generated a lot of public interest in the site, but no one has purchased it yet. A local non-profit organization formed called Save Cuesta Inlet (SCI) and began fundraising to try to purchase the property. We've been coordinating with SCI as a potential partner and stakeholder for Cuesta Inlet acquisition. We also approached the Los Osos Community Services District (CSD) to gauge this entity's interest in Cuesta Inlet, and potential ability to provide future parks and recreation services to local members of the public. We intend to support acquisition of Cuesta Inlet through federal and state grant funding and the Service has access to several programs designed for land acquisition projects

that conserve and protect listed species and their habitats, promote coastal access for the public, and create other natural recreation opportunities for the public.

**Regulatory Permitting.** Once Cuesta Inlet is secure from future development through acquisition, we will work with the partners to create a habitat restoration plan and project design for the site. We expect a variety of regulatory permits to be needed, depending on the design plan, and required activities. These are likely to include but are not limited to California Environmental Quality Act Compliance and a Coastal Development Permit. We expect additional grant funding to be needed to support the permitting phase of the project.

**Habitat Restoration, Remediation, and Construction.** After the site is purchased for the designated owner(s)/partner(s), the next phase of the project includes implementation of efforts to restore the sensitive habitat types onsite, remediation, (which basically entails removal of the abandon boats and other trash that has accumulated), and construction of public service amenities. The property owner(s)/partner(s) will need to decide what specific elements to include in the site design. Some possibilities are public restrooms, kiosks for public education, maps, and other outreach, trash facilities and pet waste disposal bags, a network of trails, fencing, and maybe a boardwalk. We'd like to implement other elements designed to support recovery of California seablite and Morro shoulderband snail into this phase of the project. Again, this phase of the project will need additional grant funding.

**Operations and Maintenance.** The last phase of the project includes the ongoing operations and maintenance of Cuesta Inlet. Possible items that may be required include trash disposal, cleaning of the bathrooms, invasive weed treatments and other vegetation management activities, trail maintenance, and any other upkeep and general maintenance of installed facilities, such as boardwalk and fencing repairs. Ideally funding for continued operations and maintenance will come from some type of endowment, or other revenue source generated from the public.

We greatly appreciate the invaluable contributions that the CSD provides to the community of Los Osos. Collaborating with the CSD on this project is essential due to their deep local knowledge of Los Osos and the immense community support of the agency. We are committed to conservation in Los Osos and all the species dependent on its unique ecosystem. With the HCP and LOCP coming online, preserving open spaces in Los Osos is increasingly vital. We look forward to discussing our vision for the Cuesta Inlet and our project proposal in further detail.



## Notes from CSD/LOCAC/Community Members meeting re: Need for Parks and Active Recreation

Meeting held on February 12, 2024 at the CSD office in Los Osos

Attendees: Deborah Howe, Matthew Fourecroy, Ron Munds, Karen Kimura, Molly Brown, Tom Maier, Pandora Nash-Karner, Ron Roach, Andrea Lueker, Trish Bartel

1. SLO County is creating a needs assessment for parks in SLO County per Pandora
2. Pickleball club of Los Osos is utilizing grant writers to help with the creation of pickleball courts
3. Need to work with the County on how we can help with needs assessment and the creation of parks
4. Find Alternative funding for parks in Los Osos
5. Money is current available from the state of California
6. Need to review CSD Parks report
7. Land on Pine/LOVR could be required to mitigate to add a walking/biking trail along LOVR
8. Locations for pocket parks and active recreation
  - a. Midtown
  - b. Morro Shores land to connect trail to Palisades from Ramona
  - c. Across from Middle School
  - d. Behind Middle School
  - e. Highland Street – create trails behind
  - f. Fairchild St.
  - g. Pasadena Street
  - h. LOVR
    - i. Grocery outlet land east
    - ii. Post Office land beside
    - iii. Chase Bank land beside
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> street between Merrimaker and first home
  - j. Pecho – Anastazi land
9. Types of recreation needed
  - a. Sports fields
    - i. Soccer
    - ii. Little league
    - iii. Basketball
    - iv. Volleyball

- b. Pool/Aquatic park
  - c. Dog Park
  - d. Inclusive playground
  - e. Covered picnic areas
  - f. Community gardens
  - g. Walking trails/multi-model
  - h. Tennis Courts
  - i. Pickleball courts – 8 courts
  - j. Disc Golf
  - k. Boat lunch – Cuesta or 1<sup>st</sup> Street
10. Sunnyside school
- a. Sports field
    - i. Baseball
    - ii. Basketball
    - iii. Volleyball court
  - b. Dog park
  - c. Community gardens
  - d. Walking trails with exercise equipment - inclusive
  - e. Par Course/Climbing structures – inclusive
  - f. Auditorium
  - g. Health Center/Parks Center
  - h. Green open space
11. Purple water locations for community gardens
- a. Sunnyside school
  - b. Sea Pines resort
  - c. Monarch elementary school
  - d. Middle school
  - e. Baywood elementary school
12. Next meeting March 18, 2024 at 5:30 pm at CSD office

## Agenda

March 18, 2024 at 5:30 pm

LOCAC/CSD/Community Meeting on Active Recreation in Los Osos

### Invitees:

Deborah Howe, Matthew Fourecroy, Ron Munds, Molly Brown, Andrea Lueker, Danielle McNamara, Pandora Nash-Karner, Ron Roach, Yishai Horowitz, Trish Bartel

1. Review Minutes
2. Create outline for a community meeting
  - a. What needs to be done prior
    - i. Determine what sports could go where
    - ii. Map the community easements for safe routes to recreational sites
    - iii. Create list of recreation we will concentrate on
    - iv. Locations for pocket parks
  - b. What groups need to be talked to prior to community meeting
  - c. Lots that we want to approach owners on for donation or sale
  - d. Community Gardens with Purple water
    - i. Who to work with to set up?
    - ii. Ask the LO Garden Club to assist?
  - e. Safe routes to school and recreation sites
3. Update on Sunnyside school
4. Next Steps and Next meeting

**CSD/LOCAC Agenda**  
**May 13, 2024 at 6pm**  
**CSD Conference Room**

Attendees: Ron Munds, Matthew Fourecroy, Deborah Howe, Molly Brown, Danielle McNamara, Yishai Horowitz, Trish Bartel, Andrea Lueker, Pandora Nash-Karner, Ron Roach

1. Los Osos Community Plan approved by California Coastal Commission with minor changes
2. Los Osos Hábitat Plan approved
3. Corridor Study
  - a. Discussion
4. Sunnyside School
  - a. Current school update - Deborah Howe
5. Cuesta Inlet
  - a. Save Cuesta Inlet response - Deborah Howe
  - b. Meeting with Fish and Wildlife - Ron Munds
  - c. What restrictions will be placed on this project?
  - d. How to create a non ADA project
6. Midtown Park Site
  - a. Deed restrictions on this site, meet with Kate Balentine - Ron Munds
  - b. 13.7 acre site, need to work with Coastal Commission - need volunteer
  - c. Talk with Templeton and Cambria General Managers on funding - Ron Munds
7. Palisades Park
  - a. Set up a Zoom with Shaun Cooper at Parks and Rec to discuss the process to amend the current park plan - Matthew, Ron
8. Community Easements
  - a. Discuss who would have the easements labeled - Ron Munds/Trish Bartel
  - b. Walk the easements to find the issues - Trish Bartel
9. CSD list of empty lots
  - a. Copy of all lots are attached - Matthew Fourecroy
  - b. How could they be developed into pocket parks?
10. Community Gardens
  - a. Speak to Celebrate Los Osos on collaboration - Danielle McNamara
11. California Coastal trail from Cayucos to Montana de Oro State Park
  - a. Is this part of corridor study?

**May 13 MinutesCSD/LOCAC Minutes**  
**June 24, 2024 Agenda at 6pm**  
**CSD Conference Room**

Attendees: Ron Munds, Deborah Howe, Molly Brown, Trish Bartel, Gary Katayama

Absent: Matthew Fourecroy, Danielle McNamara, Yishai Horowitz, Pandora Nash-Kramer, Ron Roach

1. Los Osos Community Plan approved by California Coastal Commission with minor changes
  - a. *June Hearing on the LOCP at the Coastal Commission Meeting being held in Morro Bay. Meeting will be held over 3 days, June 12-14. Check Coastal Commission agenda for date and time of the LOCP discussion.*
  - b. *LOCP will then go to the Board of Supervisors in September 2024.*
  - c. *Basin Management Committee has agreed to the CCC recommendation of 1% which is a development of 64 homes if this meets the Basin Yield Metric of 80-85%*
2. Los Osos Hábitat Plan approved
  - a. *Mitigated land cost of \$1.19 SF*
3. Corridor Study
  - a. *No update at this time. Public Works representatives will be attending the active transportation meeting of LOCAC on May 21st.*
4. Sunnyside School
  - a. *Current school update - None at this time, still waiting on the appraisal of the site to be completed*
5. Cuesta Inlet
  - a. Save Cuesta Inlet response - *Margarete Schmidt from Save Cuesta Inlet gave an update*
    - i. *Cuesta Inlet has been appraised at \$700,000*
    - ii. *Save Cuesta Inlet has grants available now to purchase the property*
    - iii. *Save Cuesta Inlet and their grants are all non profits so legally can't pay over the appraised amount of \$700,000.*
    - iv. *Save Cuesta Inlet has been negotiating with the owners for over a year.*
    - v. *Save Cuesta Inlet has raised over \$180,000 and has others who want to donate when the property is in escrow.*
    - vi. *Save Cuesta Inlet has a great vision for the property which includes creating kayak racks to rent out to help pay for the yearly maintenance that will be needed*
    - vii. *There are 5 owners. One owner owns 60%, 2 owners who will only sell if the price is \$1 million dollars own 12%. All are descendants of the original owners*

- viii. *The 5 owners have decided to re parcel the property into 7 parcels. The 5 owners have sent this proposal to the Coastal Commission.*
    - b. Meeting with Fish and Wildlife - Ron Munds
      - i. *Emily Levin our local representative from Fish and Wildlife has prepared a white paper on the Cuesta Inlet and will share it with this group at our June meeting*
    - c. What restrictions will be placed on this project
- 6. Midtown Park Site
  - a. Deed restrictions on this site, meet with Kate Balentine - Ron Munds
    - i. *4:1 mitigation site*
  - b. 13.7 acre site, need to work with Coastal Commission - need volunteer
  - c. Talk with Templeton and Cambria General Managers on funding - Ron Munds
    - i. *completed*
- 7. Palisades Park
  - a. Set up a Zoom with Shaun Cooper at Parks and Rec to discuss the process to amend the current park plan - Ron
    - i. *The following steps would need to be taken to change the master plan:*
      1. *Public input to consider the change*
      2. *General Plan conformity determination (through County Planning and Building) for the change*
      3. *Environmental determination for any development permit*
      4. *Los Osos Community Park Master Plan was approved in 2003.*
- 8. Community Easements
  - a. Discuss who would have the easements labeled - Ron Munds
    - i. *Suggestion to speak to David Grimms who works in the Public Works Department*
  - b. Walk the easements to find the issues - Trish Bartel
- 9. CSD list of empty lots
  - a. Copy of all lots are attached - Matthew Fourecroy - completed
  - b. How could they be developed into pocket parks?
    - i. *Concern is how to maintain the pocket parks, cleaning up trash and emptying trash cans*
    - ii. *Concern is that the homeless population may take over the pocket parks*
    - iii. *Discuss how to achieve pocket parks at next meeting, ran out of time*
- 10. Community Gardens
  - a. Speak to Celebrate Los Osos on collaboration - Danielle McNamara
    - i. *Celebrate Los Osos is not interested in collaboration at this time*
    - ii. *Danielee has a list of interested parties willing to help with community gardens*

Adjorn: 7:05 pm



**Minutes**  
**CSD/LOCAC Parks Committee**  
**June 24, 2024 at 6 pm**  
**CSD Conference Room**

Attendees: Ron Munds, Deborah Howe, Molly Brown, Trish Bartel, Gary Katayama, Margarete Schmidt, Andrea Lucker

Absent: Matthew Fourecroy, Danielle McNamara, Yishai Horowitz, Pandora Nash-Kramer, Ron Roach

Due to the presentation with Fish and Wildlife, we only discussed the Cuesta Inlet. Emily Levin (local in Los Osos) and Kristie Scarazzo (Ventura) presented their white paper on the Cuesta Inlet. Copies will be emailed to the group separately. Highlights of the discussion are below.

1. Funds to purchase
  - a. Fish and Wildlife have some funds, want to protect one of the last open coastal parcels, would also utilize grants that are available
  - b. California Coastal Commission has grants available to purchase coastal lands
  - c. Wildlife Conservation Board has available grants
  - d. Both Fish and Wildlife and Save Cuesta Inlet are bound by the \$700,000 appraisal cost. Fish and Wildlife has some flexibility in this aspect as they did with the Pismo preserve.
  - e. The 5 owners who inherited the property want a Million dollars for the property.
2. Endangered species
  - a. California Seablite
  - b. Morro Shoulderband Snail
3. Safeguard from housing development
  - a. Need to move quickly to purchase the site
  - b. Owners (5) of the site have developed new parcel sizes/lot lines, some are underwater that they now want a new appraisal. Save Cuesta Inlet paid \$40,000 for the last appraisal and can't afford another appraisal cost.
4. Combine conservation with recreation
  - a. Both Save Cuesta Inlet and Fish and Wildlife would like to get the kayaks off the ground and move them to racks that would be provided
  - b. Both groups believe dogs should still be able to be on the property
  - c. Installation of dog poop bag/containers should be provided
  - d. Both groups like the concept of a board walk around the inlet that would allow vegetation below to survive
5. Other sites to model after
  - a. Elfin Forest
  - b. Fiscalini Ranch
  - c. Pismo Preserve

6. County involvement
  - a. Currently working on El Toro Creek to create a park, the County doesn't have the bandwidth to work on another project.
  - b. The County just assumed Veterans Hall in Cayucos and Morro Bay Golf Course
  - c. Could be part of HCP, concerned if that happened LO would lose control on how the property would be developed or not developed.
7. Other concerns
  - a. Owners have split the parcels from 5 to 7 parcels
  - b. With the Coastal Commission approving a 1% build rate in Los Osos, the owners could find an individual who could quickly buy the lot.
  - c. Are the lots on the waitlist for building?
  - d. This is a long term project to get community support, County Support, Fish and Wildlife support. Looking at 5 years possible.
  - e. Majority of property is zoned recreational, a couple parcels are zoned residential.
  - f. Los Osos has another area that is a concern. That location is 538 acres off Pasadena Drive that has been subdivided and is currently for sale for \$7 million dollars. It is all underwater.
8. Next Steps
  - a. Fish and Wildlife to discuss project with Kip Morales, planning manager at SLO County Planning and Building group
  - b. Determine how to fund the maintenance of the property
  - c. Develop plan on funding of the project. Place priority on this aspect to safeguard from development.
  - d. Set up monthly meetings with Fish and Wildlife, CSD, Save Cuesta Inlet and this committee to help facilitate and expedite this project.

Our next meeting is **July 22, 2024**. I would like to open that meeting with how to fund projects and fund maintenance on future projects. Until we have that figured out we can't have a town hall meeting to discuss parks and the need for active recreation in our community.

We will also discuss the white paper that Fish and Wildlife provided to us at our last meeting.